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9 TO

FRIENDS IN IRELAND,

AND ELSEWHERE;

**A MOURNFUL WORD TO THE MERRY-HEARTED
IN ZION, WITH A WORD OF COMFORT TO
HER BOWED-DOWN MOURNERS.**

Written in great exercise of soul and spirit in obedience to the Lord.

BY THOMAS UPSHER.

"Wo to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep."—
Luke vi. 25.

"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, but giving of thanks."—Ephes. v. 4.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."—
Matt. v. 4.

"These are they which came out of great tribulations, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—
Rev. vii. 14.

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A MOURNFUL WORD TO THE MERRY
HEARTED IN ZION,
WITH A WORD OF COMFORT TO HER
BOWED DOWN MOURNERS.

Friends that profess the self-denying way of the Lord Jesus Christ, (who was a man of sorrows, and deeply acquainted with grief,) and yet are of a jolly spirit, and of a merry heart, who can laugh and jest at pleasure, saying, there is no harm in it.

I have this to say to you, whether you will hear or forbear, that the Lord is displeased with you, and calls for mourning and weeping in secret places, instead of laughter and jesting in company. And I must needs tell you, that if ever you were rightly bowed, and humbled in a sense of your lost and undone states, and were made to lament and mourn in the sight and feeling of your wretchedness, you have too soon quitted that exercise; you have not past often enough through

the fire, neither have you been baptized enough with the waters of many tribulations. You have not drunk sufficiently of the cup of trembling at the hand of the *Lord*, and therefore you must come down from your pleasant and delightful seats, and be humbled as in dust and ashes before the *Lord of Hosts*, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem ; and you must pass through it again, and again, till all your dross is taken away, and all your light chaff be burnt up. O friends, you are those that are at ease in Zion, and have taken up a rest too soon, and now the Lord is about to disturb you, and rouse you up out of your false security ; blessed are those that are willing to come forth to judgment at the sound and alarm of the trumpet of his eternal word, for I proclaim in the Lord's power that the time hastens and draws on apace ; that judgment shall eminently and searchingly begin at the house of God in his sanctuary, amongst his people, that are peculiarly called by his name ; and the unfaithful, the hypocrite, and rotten-hearted, shall tremble with the shaking horror of his *searching judgments*. And you that are jolly-spirited, merry-hearted,

and that take liberty to laugh, joke, and jest at pleasure, the very pillars of your house shall tremble, you shall weep and mourn in solitary places, and strow your tears in secret corners.

Therefore take warning, I pray you, and be humbled before the Lord, and cry mightily to him night and day, that he may take vengeance speedily upon that *idle* and *airy* spirit, from whence springs these things that are contrary to the mournful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! I entreat you, watch and pray, yea, cry mightily to the Lord God of heaven and earth, that he may *crucify* and *utterly slay* this nature in you, which hath often led you to forgetfulness of God, and hath veiled and darkened you many times.

Is it not, think you, very sorrowful to consider, how a great many in a little time after they have come out of a *good meeting*, where they have been under a sense of the Lord's power, and have been reached with a tendering visitation, fall to *idle*, *silly*, *needless* discourse, and it may be to *laughter* and *jesting*, which I declare is as *contrary* to what they were before as darkness to light; and tell them of it,

they will say, they think no harm ? Well I tell you, there is harm in it; you hurt yourselves and others, and you lay a stumbling-block in the way of the weak ; you are bad examples, you give occasion to them that are *without* ; for though they may seem to be pleased with your company and conversation, they will slyly ridicule and slight you as to religion, and will, as I have heard some say, such an one is as merry as we ; for all his serious principles he will jest, and laugh, and joke, and speak at large, as well as we.

These things are not of a good savour. How do you think this will answer the end of your holy calling ? which is to be the salt of the earth, as lights in the world, as a city set on an hill that cannot be hid. Trees of righteousness bringing forth much fruit to the glory of God. Fruits of self-denial, heavenly fruits, while you are on earth, giving a manifest testimony, that you are true followers of the Lamb through great tribulations. I would have you consider Christ's words in the 6th of Luke, " Wo to you that laugh now, for you shall weep and mourn." And also the Apostle's words, Ephesians 5th, where he speaks of fornication, co-

vetousness, uncleanness, and filthiness ; telling them these things do not become saints, neither foolish talking nor jesting, but rather giving of thanks. And consider Christ Jesus your Captain and Saviour, of whom it is said, he was never seen to laugh, but had often been seen to weep.

It is to be feared some of you will harden your hearts, and put at least a silent slight upon this warning and counsel ; but such shall know assuredly in a day of distress and bitter adversity, (which shall certainly be their portion), that these sayings are not idle tales, nor yet such little matters as some would make them, though while they are fat and full, and in a day of prosperity they may kick against reproof, and puff up their hearts in wantonness against this tender advice.

Methinks some will be ready to say, What ! wouldest thou have us melancholy, morose, always reserved and shut up from innocent communication ? I answer, no ; for that would be an extreme on the other hand : that which I am deeply concerned to speak against is laughter, foolish talking, and jesting, and such like. And that which I am speaking for, is temperance,

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sobriety, and moderation, with watchfulness over our words, actions, deportment, and behaviour at all times, and in all places, upon all occasions, remembering the saying of our Lord Jesus Christ, That we must give an account at the day of judgment for every idle word we shall speak.

I do tell you again in much assurance, that the Great God of the spirits of all flesh, calls for mourning at your hands; and happy shall they be that answer his call in time.

And now I am under a necessity to remind you of the late prophecy of that ancient, eminent, and faithful messenger and minister of Jesus Christ, William Edmundson, in Dublin, at this half-year's meeting: the substance of which was, that a dreadful day of distress was hastening on apace, and should surely come, in this and other nations, and that the Lord would shake the fair and lofty buildings of many, with their pleasant things that they have delighted in. And this will surely come to pass as ever it was spoken; therefore friends be not of an unbelieving heart, Oh! surely that counsel is good to you, which the Lord by the prophet Amos

gave to Israel, when he threatened them with sore judgments, which was on this wise : “ Thus will I do unto thee, O Israel, and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.”—Amos iv. 12.

But my heart mourns. Ah ! I am distressed in my soul, my bowels are pained within me for the sake of those that will have their own will, and go on their old road ; let the servants of the Lord say what they will as his ambassadors and ministers : but I am satisfied there is a remnant that will embrace this warning and counsel, and forsake, leave off, and turn their backs upon these foolish things, and thankfully come and drink a bitter cup of condemnation and judgment for their by-past jests, laughter, and wantonness of speech and behaviour : and they shall come to mourn for all these things by which they regardlessly past away much precious time, and are greatly behind-hand in their day’s work of salvation, which is to be wrought in fear and trembling. Phil. ii. 12. Not in laughter and jesting, and they shall mourn and lament because of their misspent time, and they

shall be diligent to redeem it, and they shall redeem it.

And the Lord will make these brave and honourable men and women in his work and service, and will make them shine in his comeliness in the life of righteousness and self-denial, and their last days shall be their best days ; the nearer they grow to their grave, the nearer they shall be to the Lord, and the clearer shall be their assurance by his Spirit of his eternal love to them.

Finally, my friends, to whom I am writing in the bowedness and grief of my spirit, I pray you, I beseech you with beseechings, take warning, take the counsel and advice of a poor servant of the Lord ; haste and come away out of these foolish customs and practices, and touch with them no more for ever. Then shall my sorrowful soul rejoice in the Lord for your sakes, and you shall reap the peace and advantage of it to your poor immortal souls, when life and time, with all these lower comforts shall fail you.

So to the light and Spirit of truth I commit you, which will readily show you in yourselves those things that are con-

trary to the life of Christ, and will give you power against them, if you be faithful to its blessed and holy discoveries; and it will enable you to shine forth in sobriety, gravity, humility, and temperance, in all things to the glory of the everlasting God, and the promotion of a self-denying life, then shall it be well with you, whatever judgments, calamities, and miseries come upon the children of disobedience.

And now a few words of comfort to those that are bowed down *mourners* in Zion, who are faithful to the Lord, but are deeply afflicted with temptations, trials, and buffettings many ways, which make them to fear, they shall not hold out to the end. Dear friends, I can call you dear, for so you are to the Lord and to my soul, and I will surely shew you what the Lord has shewn and sealed to me in the word of life, which is on this wise.

That you are his peculiar and choice *jewels*, and he hath a very tender regard to you, and as you have an eye to him, and cleave to his Spirit in your hearts, he will surely keep you as the *apple* of his *eye*, and he will not suffer the devourer

to destroy you ; and though at times you may be tossed with tempests, and deeply afflicted and hardly beset on every hand, and may seem for a time as if you were forsaken of the Lord, and you may be ready to doubt whether ever he will appear to your joy and comfort again. And though it may be so, that you think your condition not to be equalled, and are like poor David who said in his distress, after he had seen the great deliverance of the Lord at several times, I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul. Yet the Lord God of his sure mercies, gave him to see the desire of his soul at last, and delivered him out of all distress. Even so will the Lord do for you, whose minds are stayed upon him, and truly trust in him, and therefore, let patience have its perfect work, and endeavour to be content with the dealings of the Lord, for he knows best what is best for you : and have a great care you are not instrumental for want of patience to increase your exercise. For I know by my own experience, that when the Lord brings the soul into the fiery furnace, which is the spirit of judgment and burning, Isa. iv., then the enemy he works to make it uneasy and

restless under the purifying judgments of the *Lord*. And then if it be not watchful, it grows impatient, and here a cloud of exercises and doubtings comes over it, and sometimes is almost brought to the gates and jaws of despair. And thus a multitude of unprofitable afflictions has come upon some for want of patience and for want of being resigned and given up in all things to the will of God, to trust their *all* in his hands, being faithful and diligent in his work.

Again, sometimes the *Lord* is pleased to hide his face for a moment, for the exercise of the soul, according to his great wisdom for its good ; then the enemy he works again to bring into impatience, and if he prevails, then he labours in the next place, to set the soul at work for itself *without* the *Lord*, to get enjoyments of its own, and kindle sparks of fire, by the heat and strugglings of its own spirit. And now again, abundance of exercises follows upon this, for these empty flashes hold not long ; when the soul comes to be sensible it lies down in sorrow, and sometimes the *Lord* is pleased to suffer it to dwell, as in a land of *drought*, for a

season, and now is ready to be cast down into great discouragements again: and all this is for want of true patience, and a free and constant giving up of the will to the will of God, and to become as *clay* in the hand of the *potter*. Read Isa. L. 10, 11.

And therefore this is the word of advice, which I tenderly give unto all such as are in deep exercises of affliction, upon your souls' account.

Wait often upon the Lord, not only in meetings, but *out* of meetings also, that you may feel his power to subject your wills to his will, and in every thing to be resigned to his disposal and dealings, and then hard things will be made easy, and bitter things will be made sweet: and in the Lord's time through many tribulations, you shall come forth as *gold* seven times *refined*, and your warfare shall be accomplished, and your iniquity pardoned, and you shall dwell for ever in that city, where the inhabitant shall not say I am sick, but the people that dwell therein shall be all righteous, and the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and their God their glory, and the days of your mourning

shall be ended, for sorrow and sighing
shall flee away.

And then you bowed down ones under
many afflictions, shall lift up your bowed
down heads, and by living experience,
sing that blessed song of Zion, that the
Lord God eternal hath turned your cap-
tivity as the streams of the south, and
has done great things for you, whereof
you are glad, he hath turned your barren
wilderness, and desolate desert into an
holy and heavenly paradise, where you
eat of the tree of life, and drink of the
water of life freely.

I can say my heart overflows with love
to you poor afflicted souls every where;
and I do sympathise with you, according
to my experience, and do pray to the
Lord for you, that you may have patience,
and be resigned into the hand of the Lord,
subject to his will in all things; and then
never doubt, but he that has laid the
foundation, will in his own time lay the
top-stone also, I say this flows forth in a
spring of pure love to you.

From one, (who though young in years),
has past through many deep exercises, and

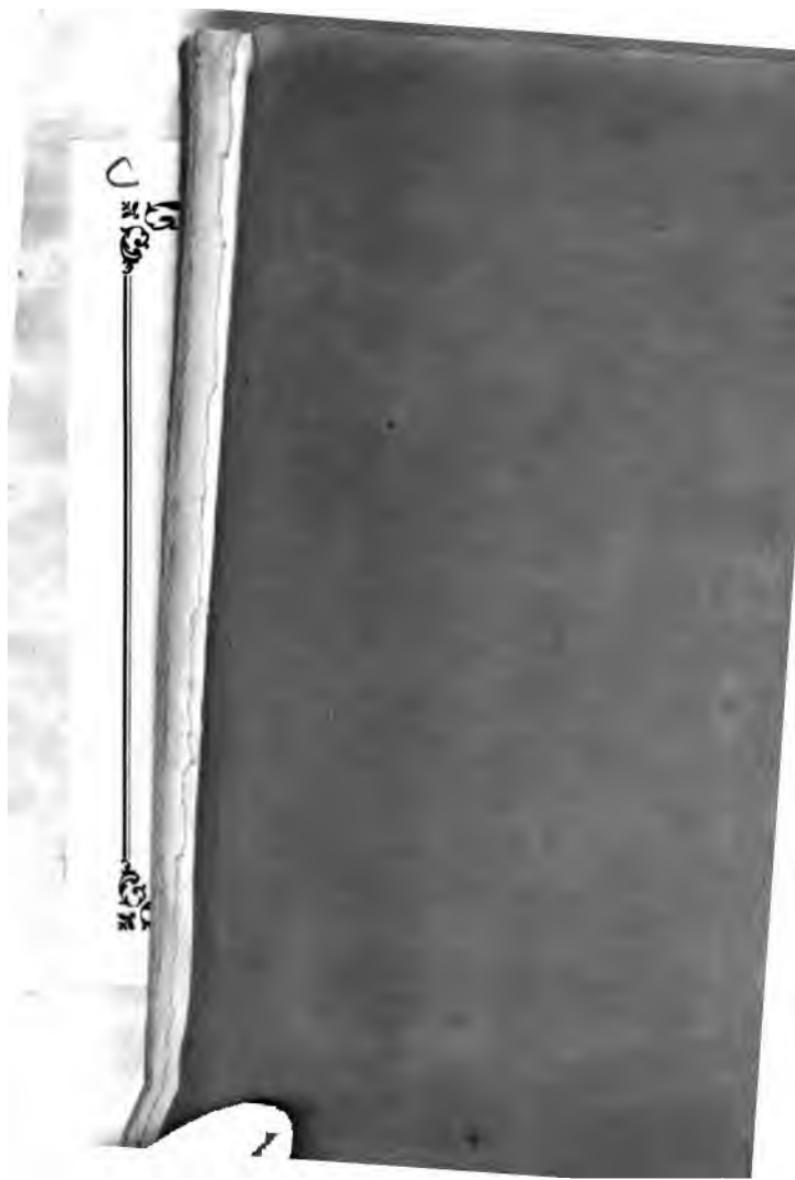
has seen the wonderful deliverances of the Lord, in many great temptations, and has as much reason as any man living to keep humble, and low, and watchful, before the Lord, all the remainder of the days of my pilgrimage.

THOMAS UPSHER.

*Dublin, 15th of the
3d Month, 1699.*

THE END.







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